

trading at \$2 a pound compared to the \$1.30 a pound that it averaged over the last decade.

Some packages of diapers that cost about \$25 as recently as last year now cost around \$40, and there are fewer diapers inside the package, further emphasizing the nature of the problem.

By the way, these higher prices disproportionately impact the poor and middle class, who don't have the luxury of investing their income and don't have the luxury of having that added buffer.

And we in Utah are feeling the pinch. According to a recent survey, 85 percent of Utahans are worried about inflation.

So what does this mean? Well, sadly, it means hard choices are in front of us; hard choices that we are going to have to face sooner than we might wish, but we will have to face them whether we want to or not.

This means that we will have to say no to some hard things; things that—while not necessarily bad in and of themselves, things that might be good; things that others are incorrectly presenting as necessary and affordable when they are not. But we have to say no to them so that we can say yes to what is necessary.

So what is truly necessary? Well, being able to buy groceries and put food on the table; being able to pay your rent or your mortgage; being able to turn on the heat or the air-conditioning in your home; being able to buy gasoline to drive to work, to the doctor, or to take your kids to school; being able to pay for school clothes and field-trip fees, not to mention baseball uniforms and soccer cleats.

And you can forget about that trip to see that relative you haven't been able to embrace in 16 months.

These are all things that are necessary and they are all things that have one thing in common. They are all being jeopardized because of the government's reckless spending and acting outside of its proper scope.

This, you see, creates a vicious cycle. It is a cycle that is all too convenient for many in government, who are making the decisions.

And who makes the decisions ultimately? Well, that is Congress—the Senate and the House of Representatives. You see, under our constitutional system, you can't spend any money through the Treasury of the United States without Congress authorizing it, without Congress appropriating it. So we have to do all of this by law, and it ultimately comes down to us.

That dynamic I described earlier of an effective printing press that, you know—well, it is a little more complicated than that. It is effectively a case that we just print more money, compounded by the fact that, culturally, within the Congress of the United States—among Republicans and Democrats alike, among Senators and Members of the House of Representa-

tives alike—we have grown too accustomed to a pattern, a dangerous pattern, that is good for the political class, maybe favorable in some ways for a small handful of elected politicians, but bad for everyone else.

You see, the way it works in this town, the way the news media tends to report on these things, you tend to get praised if you vote yes. There is always someone you can point to who benefits from the bill that gets passed from the money that gets spent.

Very often does anyone get anything but criticism for voting against those things, even if, even though, even when by their very nature those things tend to impoverish, albeit in increments, increments that are sometimes difficult to observe at any given moment, to purchasing power of poor and middle-class Americans.

So what this mean is, in many ways, we are trading one thing for another. We are trading the ability to be praised as an elected official, an elected politician one day in order to spend money. You get praised for that, but poor and middle-class Americans are paying the price.

For a long time we have been able to sweep this under the rug. For a long time Washington has avoided getting blamed for this because it has been incremental, it has been indirect, it has been something that is perhaps explainable in some cases through other mechanisms. Not everyone immediately connects inflation to out-of-control spending decisions by elected Senators and congressmen.

But we have ratcheted up the spending levels so much over the last year and a half. And, yes, this has been under the direction of Republicans and Democrats alike. We have turned that up so much, so quickly that people are feeling the effects more directly, more immediately, more unmistakably than ever before. And, yes, it is our fault because, yes, we have put our own political convenience ahead of the interests of poor and middle-class Americans, and that is to our shame. That is to our shame especially if we don't recognize that we are doing it and seek to correct it.

When it comes to voting on large spending packages, there is this trend of politicians voting yes and being praised, and politicians voting no and being criticized.

Look, it will be of little comfort to the poor and middle class of this country who feel the buying power of their seemingly dwindling paycheck shrink each week just so that politicians can vote yes on large spending packages for a short-term amount of praise and political gain.

At times I have been accused of being a reflexive no vote on things that some of my colleagues are willing to explain away or justify or defend wholeheartedly. But here is an important point that I would like to make: I vote no not by reflex but through reason.

I vote no when I see how the consequences will affect those I represent

in real, everyday life, not just the intended consequences of legislation that might indeed have a good goal and might indeed accomplish good things, but the unintended negative consequences also.

I vote no if it will mean saying yes to what really matters, what really counts for making everyday life better for Utahans and hardworking Americans across the country.

And I vote no so that Utahans can say yes to the things that they need, because if we don't ever say no, we are hurting them. If we always say yes, we are putting them in a position of having to say no to the things that matter most to them and to their children and their families.

Look, this government's reckless spending is notorious, but it is finally catching up with us. This problem exists because the Federal Government and the politicians in Washington, DC, work hand-in-hand with our central bank to spend enormous amounts of money that we simply do not have.

This has been facilitated by so many who are so willing to call on it, even though it results in the dangerous accumulation of power and money in the hands of the few at the expense of the poor and middle class.

We are feeling the consequences of these things right here and right now. It is up to us to take action, to pump the brakes and steer our government back in a fiscally responsible, sustainable, and sane direction. The consequences will only get worse if we do not and if we do not do so very fast.

I yield the floor.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL MONDAY,
JULY 19, 2021, AT 3 P.M.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate stands adjourned until Monday at 3 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 3:36 p.m., adjourned until Monday, July 19, 2021, at 3 p.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate:

FEDERAL AGRICULTURAL MORTGAGE CORPORATION

CHESTER JOHN CULVER, OF IOWA, TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE FEDERAL AGRICULTURAL MORTGAGE CORPORATION, VICE CHARLES A. STONES.

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

GABRIEL CAMARILLO, OF TEXAS, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, VICE JAMES E. MCPHERSON.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

ALAN F. ESTEVEZ, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR INDUSTRY AND SECURITY, VICE MIRA RADIELOVIC RICARDEL, RESIGNED.

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

RICHARD TRUMKA, JR., OF MARYLAND, TO BE A COMMISSIONER OF THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION FOR A TERM OF SEVEN YEARS FROM OCTOBER 27, 2021, VICE ROBERT S. ADLER.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

JEFFREY LANE FLAKE, OF ARIZONA, TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY.

KENT DOYLE LOGSDON, OF PENNSYLVANIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF